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Harvard Business Branch

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# To all Workingmen of the Furniture Department of America.

9331.8174a15

DEAR FRIENDS!

Recognizing the necessity of reducing the hours of labor, the

**UNITED CABINET MAKERS OF NEW YORK**

find cause to bring the following facts to your consideration:

1) The concentration of capital into the hands of a few monopolies, is a system by which only a few enjoy Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, leaving the great majcrities to eke out life in misery, which is contrary to nature.

2) Through the introduction of labor having machinery, by which under the present system the wealthy classes are only favored, is the result that so many thousands are wandering in search of labor, which makes men offer their energies for a pittance that but meagerly saves them from starvation.

3) As the earth is the common parent of all mankind, from whose bosom each individual inherits the inalienable right to live and draw subsistence, therefore any and every interruption of the enjoyment of this right by the monopoly of traffic in the soil is a violation of the sacred principle of justice, and must ever be attended in the future, as in the past, with direful consequences.

4) Eight hours of labor shall be the extent of a legal day's work, being as much as the health, happiness and progressive improvement of society will permit.

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5) The Emancipation of the laboring classes must be accomplished through the efforts of the laboring classes alone.

Therefore, Fellow-Workingmen, from the facts stated and as at the present time educated workingmen are especially discussing the question of a reduction of the hours of labor at their meetings, and as the Workingmen of the Furniture Department of the City of New York have organized for the last six months, and as we see the indefatigable immolation of Trades Unions, and as we find several branches of the Building Trades already working eight hours, while there are others preparing themselves to make the demand of their employers, while others are in open battle with the capitalists, the workingmen of the whole country should take interest in this movement, and combine themselves with each other to accomplish the normal eight hour working day, and to secure the means of superior happiness, not only for ourselves but also for our descendants.

You see the wealthy organize against the poor in vast political combinations and in monopolies of cheat. The rich cannot accomplish proletarian reform, their efforts come of the superficial emotions of charity or else of magnanimity, which is still more offensive to the poor than charity. The rich and easy of the world having taken possession of the production of the poor cannot aid these poor without a semblance of braging hypocrisy which is magnanimity, or else of triumphant condescension which is charity; and the workingmen who are naturally the most integral in manliness of all classes, look with suspicion upon the commiseration of the class they have fattened. The working classes and those who

fain would work, find that the practice of labor yields them nought but degradation; if the whole population were in the habit of labor, and the products of this labor were to be distributed equally, there would be vastly more wealth, infinitely less drudgery, and proportionately more purity, culture and happiness; not one half of the people labor, and consequently over one half the people feed on the labors of the minor half. From this very fact our ephemeral lives are made shorter, and our victimized neighbors' graves ghastlier. We fools writhing in the shame of poverty, of unorganized life, shrug our shoulders and talk about compromising our dignity in the idea of compulsory fraternization.

Wealth and plenty whether gotten by fairness or by robbery, are the fruit of force combined, poverty and crime the inevitable entailment of social disintegration. Society is a mechanical instrumentality, made up of groups of integers, and while caring for itself is unable to obtain happiness, the object of life, without obeying a discipline of mutual reciprocity of the forces of the integers of which it is composed.

We want to draw your attention why workingmen don't participate in this movement of accomplishing the eight hours; we find they object because they believe that while they are working ten hours and over and can not supply their families with the necessaries of life, it would be impossible for them by shorter hours to support them. Though educated workingmen have made the experience that long hours are not the result of high wages, we find that trades which work ten hours and over receive smaller wages than those trades that work but eight hours. Workingmen are under the present system degraded even with merchandise; if there is

plenty to find the price is low, on the contrary when scarce the price will raise; if to-day we were all working but eight hours, those that are wandering in search of labor would be employed at the usual wages; consequently there would be less opposition in regulating wages.

After showing you the necessity of shortening the hours of labor, we trust: that you all feel yourselves (in your own interest) bound to try your utmost in this movement; organize with your fellow-workingmen to agitate this question, and then there will be no doubt that we will all succeed. If you don't combine yourselves we will remain the slaves of monopolies, and we would not deserve any better.

It is not to be denied that eight hours for a day's labor is but a small part of the demands which the working classes are entitled to, though we are assured that if we have accomplished this, we will all with greater energies agitate for a honorable livelihood.

We request all groups and societies favorable to the Eight Hour System of Labor to communicate with our society, when we will readily furnish circulars or statutes of the Eight Hour League of the Furniture Department.

Address:

*United Cabinet Makers, in care of Daniel Schneider,*
*Teutonia Assembly Rooms,*
*Nos.* 158 *&* 160 *Third Avenue,*
*New York City.*

All newspapers favorable to the cause of labor, are requested to print this circular in their columns, as a means of giving it publicity to the workmen of the furniture trade.

New-York, April 24, 1872.